

REMARKS

Claim Objections

Claim 23 was objected to for not existing. A number “23” was added between claims 22 and 24 with the status identifier “Canceled.”

As this additional number establishes consecutive numbering, Applicants believe that the objection has been cured.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 33-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement and as being indefinite.

Accordingly, claims 33-35 have been canceled.

Claims 19-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention.

The term “the steering torque regulating module” has been eliminated, and the claim has been rewritten to clarify that the additional steering torque is superimposed by means of the steering torque control module on the steering torque exerted on the steering wheel by the driver, where all terms have been given a proper antecedent basis.

The Examiner stated that claim 26 contained the phrase “such as.” Claim 26 contains no such phrase. Former claim 27 did contain the phrase, but claim 27 has been canceled.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 19-27 were rejected for being apparatus claims containing descriptions of intended use that were not structural limitations.

All remaining pending claims 19-26 and 28-32 have been rewritten as method claims.

Additionally, claims 19-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for being anticipated by Czekaj (U.S. Patent 5,742,141).

Czekaj applies a steering stop to prevent a driver from leaving a target trajectory. The stop keeps the driver from turning the steering wheel farther than required to park the vehicle in a parking space. As Czekaj states in column 4, lines 47-51, the following:

The required effort is decreased when it is determined that the operator is steering the vehicle within the desired trajectory and is increased when it is determined that the operator is steering the vehicle outside the desired trajectory.

Accordingly, Czekaj 's control depends solely on the vehicle path in relation to the trajectory. So if the driver using Czekaj's method turns the steering wheel fast in a way that will take the vehicle outside the trajectory, the additional steering torque is increased. The same occurs if the driver turns the steering wheel in the same direction, but slowly. The additional steering torque applied by the Czekaj reference does therefore not depend on the speed at which the driver turns the steering wheel, only on the path that the vehicle is going to take according to the driver input.

Former claim 27, dealing with the inverse correlation between steering wheel speed and additional torque, was thus not anticipated by Czekaj. Its limitations have been included in claim 19 in the words "varying the additional steering torque in

negative correlation to the speed at which the manual steering wheel is turned.” This limitation also finds support in the specification at [0026]. Claim 27 has been canceled as a result of its incorporation into claim 19.

As amended, claim 19 is believed to be patentable over the prior art. All other pending claims depend from claim 19 and are thus believed to be allowable as well.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 28-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Czekaj in view of Shyu et al. (U.S. Patent 4,931,930).

After claim 19 has been amended to be patentable, this rejection becomes moot because claims 28-31 all depend from allowable claim 19 and are thus allowable as well.

SPECIFICATION

Acceptance of the enclosed substitute specification is respectfully requested. It is believed that the substitute specification, removing duplicate text and correcting grammatical errors, will facilitate processing of the application. It makes no substantive changes and is submitted to conform this case to the formal requirements and to provide improved readability.

The enclosed substitute specification submitted in both marked and clean versions.

CONCLUSION

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully

submit that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that personal contact would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Attorney of the Applicants at the earliest convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

/Gerlinde Nattler/

Gerlinde Nattler
Registration No. 51,272
(734) 302-6003
Attorney for Applicants